

Today's News - Friday, March 25, 2011

- Weinstein finds Kristal's "sensitively curated selection" of projects in "Immaterial World: Transparency in Architecture" invites "additional research, reflection, and architourism."
- Hume comes home from a road trip to report "despite the vast differences between New Orleans and Toronto, the automobile has brought a startling degree of sameness, similarity, even homogeneity, to the two centers."
- Mays cheers a Toronto project intended to break free of "podiumism."
- Saffron cheers the new Salvation Army Kroc Center in North Philadelphia: it "isn't the kind of eye-candy design that makes it into the glossy magazines...but it just might be the sort that can reshape a neighborhood."
- BIG snags two big wins in Sweden, going biophilic for a new sports center, and going other-worldly for a major highway junction with a floating solar sphere (this one ya just gotta see to believe!).
- Rawsthorn takes on diversity (and/or lack of) in the design professions: with "fewer the visible role models, the greater the likelihood that talented young black people will continue to miss out on careers in design. The rest of us will lose out too."
- Ken Smith shares his tools of the trade (our fave: his business card holder).
- The Japan catastrophe highlights an "emergent genre of concern-expression" via T-shirts, posters, and everything else - but is it a good thing?
- Weekend diversions:
- Moore on Tate Britain's reappraisal of James Stirling: "he could be good, and bad - but never dull" (throw in "arrogant, lecherous and sometimes boorish" - but he's still a great architect).
- Genocchio cheers Frank Lloyd Wright show at the Milwaukee Art Museum that "highlights the architect's sensitivity to nature" - but he still questions: was his "visionary architecture really sustainable?"
- "Atelier Bow-Wow: House Behaviorology" is "one of the best architecture exhibitions in Prague this year."
- von Gerkan, Marg and Partners get star treatment with a show at the German Consulate in Ho Chi Minh City, with a focus on projects completed in Vietnam.
- Daniel Arsham/Snarkitecture "DIG" things up at Storefront for Art and Architecture.
- "Infinite Variety: Three Centuries of Red and White Quilts" at Manhattan's Armory by Thinc Design: "when it comes to quilts, you've never seen this much drama."
- White wades through Friedman's "A Place in Mind: The Search for Authenticity" and wishes it looked more at contemporary placemaking and what works/what doesn't: "We are in the middle of a huge human urban living experiment."
- Hawthorne's Reading L.A. revisits Lillard's 1966 "Eden in Jeopardy" and "the various ways that 'replanners of the earth's surface' were muscling their way across the region," and "warning readers about the dangers that relentless development."
- Bey discovers an obscure 1960s sci-fi black comedy with "jaw-dropping, wide-angle photography that depicts Chicago and its modernist architecture as an otherworldly place" (great pix).

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Book Review: "Immaterial World: Transparency in Architecture": Marc Kristal crystallizes increasingly complex notions of transparency with a light touch...invites additional research, reflection, and architourism. By Norman Weinstein -- Diller Scofidio + Renfro; Alejandro Aravena; Toyo Ito; Christian de Portzamparc - ArchNewsNow.com

Drive-thru culture in Louisiana a lesson for Toronto: ...the devastation wrought by Louisianans upon Louisiana far outweighs anything a hurricane can do...despite the vast differences between New Orleans and Toronto, the automobile has brought a startling degree of sameness, similarity, even homogeneity, to the two centres. By Christopher Hume - Toronto Star

Breaking free of 'podiumism': ...there are other ways to put residential density into the downtown core, and, for a new, interesting \$100-million development...Brad. Lamb has picked one...a very tall, slender, nearly podium-free condominium tower...and a tiny urban park...Theatre Park...may well turn out to be a success... By John Bentley Mays -- Peter Clewes/architectsAlliance [image]- Globe and Mail (Canada)

Salvation Army Kroc Center: A gem for North Philadelphia: Although [it] is a gift of charity, what makes it special is the conviction that even people of small means deserve the best...isn't the kind of eye-candy design that makes it into the glossy magazines, or advances architecture, but it just might be the sort that can reshape a neighborhood. By Inga Saffron -- MGA Partners; Andropogon [images]- Philadelphia Inquirer

BIG Goes Biophilic with New Sports Center in Umeå, Sweden: ...will use the area's "natural bowl-shape" to create a dramatic 4,600 square meter ice rink, amphitheatre, restaurant, and outdoor cafe...the natural elements of the existing site dictate the design. -- Bjarke Ingels Group [images, links]- The Dirt/American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA)

BIG Unveils Energy Valley With Floating Solar Sphere: ...master plan for Stockholmsporten, a new entrance and major highway junction planned for Stockholm...supposedly self-sustaining disco ball-like sphere...covered in solar panels, which will power the sphere, allowing it to hover while also supplying 235 houses with power. The mirrored bottom...gives drivers a 180 degree view of the surrounding area... -- Bjarke Ingels Group; Grontmij; Seascape [images]- Inhabitat

Design Gets More Diverse: ...designers of color...were largely ignored by the design establishment until fairly recently...the fewer the visible role models, the greater the likelihood that talented young black people will continue to miss out on careers in design. The rest of us will lose out too..."I actually think the women thing is a tougher nut to crack. Ultimately, being a white man is probably still the easiest. There's no: 'Hey look, there's a ...'" By Alice Rawsthorn -- Eddie Opara/Pentagram; Gail Anderson; Stephen Burks; Charles Harrison; Organization of Black Designers (OBD)- New York Times

Tools of my Trade: Ken Smith on Hotels, Lawrence Halprin, and Inspiration: The landscape architect shares the tools and inspirations that help him breathe life into the artificial..."Landscapes are made up of all sorts of synthetic things, and most people try to hide it. I don't." [images]- Fast Company

You Say You're Concerned About Japan: Do you have the T-shirt to prove it? ...we're seeing enough examples of this emergent genre of concern-expression to fill a small gallery - or rather, a boutique...The Japan catastrophe has been a classic example of the "CNN effect." [slide show]- Slate

Visionary architect, and a very naughty boy - "James Stirling: Notes from the Archive": Tate Britain reappraises Stirling - who gave his name to Britain's premier architectural prize - and shows he could be good, and bad... but never dull...was seen as the very type of the award-winning architect whose buildings don't work. He was, to boot, arrogant, lecherous and sometimes boorish. By Rowan Moore -- James Gowen; Michael Wilford [images]- Guardian (UK)

Was Frank Lloyd Wright's Visionary Architecture Sustainable? "Frank Lloyd Wright: Organic Architecture for the 21st Century" at the Milwaukee Art Museum highlights the architect's sensitivity to nature, but it's hard to square his designs with eco-friendly modern practices. By Benjamin Genocchio [slide show]- Artinfo

Bespoke buildings from modern Japan: "Atelier Bow-Wow: House Behaviorology" adapts to the modern context while preserving ancient building traditions...ongoing exhibition at the Jaroslav Fragner Gallery through April 4...one of the best architecture exhibitions in Prague this year. [images]- The Prague Post

German Consulate to hold architecture exhibition in HCMC/Ho Chi Minh City: "Design in Dialogue – The Architecture of von Gerkan, Marg and Partners"...15 select international projects...prime exhibits will be projects already completed in Vietnam...through April 6- Saigon Giai Phong (Viet Nam)

DIG: A performance installation by Daniel Arsham/Snarkitecture at Storefront for Art and Architecture's gallery space will be filled with a solid volume of EPS architectural foam...will then be excavated using simple tools - hammers, picks and chisels - to transform a stock industrial material into a strange, unexpected cavern for both work and play. - Storefront for Art and Architecture

650 Quilts: "Infinite Variety: Three Centuries of Red and White Quilts": From March 25 - 30, the curated quilts will transform the Armory's Wade Thompson Drill Hall...vortex-like display...conceived by Thinc Design...when it comes to quilts, you've never seen this much drama. [images]- Design Observer

Sense of place vital to livable cities: Avi Friedman's "A Place in Mind: The Search for Authenticity"...it's about place-making...from Istanbul to Igualit...For me, too much...was about how good place-making was in centuries-old cities created in a different time...It would have been interesting to look at contemporary placemaking and what is working, along with what isn't...We are in the middle of a huge human urban living experiment. By Richard White/Riddell Kurczaba Architecture- Calgary Herald (Canada)

Reading L.A.: Richard G. Lillard on the growth machine and its discontents: "Eden in Jeopardy: Man's Prodigal Meddling with His Environment: The Southern California Experience"...a sustained, detailed complaint about the various ways that..."replanners of the earth's surface" were muscling their way across the region...warning readers about the dangers that relentless development posed to cities, culture and the environment. By Christopher Hawthorne- Los Angeles Times

Recently re-released obscure late '60s sci-fi comedy showcases Chicago architecture: "The Monitors" is an obscure black comedy...jaw-dropping, wide-angle photography that depicts Chicago...and its modernist architecture as an otherworldly place. By Lee Bey [images, video]- WBEZ Chicago Public Radio

A Tale of Two Pools: Q&A with Paulett Taggart: It was the sunniest of pools, it was the foggiest of pools, but the architectural approach is similar: there is nothing unnecessary. -- Paulett Taggart Architects; Mark Cavagnero Associates [images]- ArchNewsNow

-- wHY Architecture: L&M Arts, Venice, California
-- KK Letter: Bjarke Ingels, Terry Allen, Dave Hickey, Tadao Ando, Marianne Stockebrand, Robert Irwin, Ed Ruscha, Craig Dykers, and Iwan Baan...10 busy days in LA.

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